CLAIMS

1.   Method of offering a service provided by a server computer in a communication network, comprising a step of sending a document describing a
5   service comprising a description of a functionality implemented during a preprocessing or post-processing of data in XML format of a message exchanged during the execution of said service on the communication network.

2.   Method of offering a service according to Claim 1, wherein said functionality defines processings adapted to produce or use data in XML format
10   defined in a first abstract part of a service description document.

3.   Method of offering a service according to Claim 2, wherein the description of said functionality is inserted in said first abstract part of the service description document.

4.   Method of offering a service according to Claim 1, wherein said
15   preprocessing or said post-processing is implemented via a script language.

5.   Method of offering a service according to Claim 1, wherein said functionality is defined as a data item in XML format in a first abstract part of a service description document.

6.   Method of offering a service according to Claim 5, wherein said
20   data item in XML format defining said functionality is encoded in a second concrete part of the service description document.

7.   Method of offering a service according to Claim 1, wherein the description of said functionality comprises a list of properties supported by said functionality, said properties defining at least respectively:
25   - the node in the communication network adapted to execute said processing; and
              - the type of processing.

8.   Method of offering a service according to Claim 7, wherein said functionality also comprises a property adapted to specify whether said
30   processing is carried out on the sending or reception of said message.

9. Method of offering a service according to Claim 7, wherein said functionality also comprises a property adapted to specify the message or a set of messages to which said processing applies.

10. Method of offering a service according to Claim 7, wherein said functionality also comprises a property adapted to define the data produced or used by said processing, and possibly the type of said data.

11. Method of offering a service according to Claim 7, wherein the description of said functionality comprises a property adapted to specify whether the processing to be carried out is obligatory or optional.

12. Method of offering a service according to Claim 7, wherein, for at least one property supported by said functionality, the description of said functionality comprises a list of values attributable to said property.

13. Method of testing access to a service by a client computer in a communication network, from a service description document, comprising the following steps:

- extracting a description of a functionality implemented during a preprocessing or the post-processing of data in XML format of a message exchanged during the execution of the service on the communication network;

- reading the value associated with a property adapted to specify the node in the communication network adapted to execute the processing;

- reading the value of a property adapted to specify whether the processing is obligatory or optional; and

- verifying whether the processing is supported by the client computer in the communication network when said processing is obligatory and must be executed by said client computer in the communication network.

14. Method of validating a message received by an intermediate computer in the communication network, from a service description document comprising a description of a functionality implemented during a preprocessing or the post-processing of data in XML format of the message exchanged during the execution of a service on the communication network, comprising the following steps:

- extracting a processing from the message received;

- acquiring at least one imperative value associated with a property of the processing; and

- verifying whether said imperative value is included in a list of values which can be attributed to a property supported by said functionality described in the service description document.

15. Method according to Claim 14, wherein it also comprises the following steps:

- reading the value associated with a property adapted to specify whether the processing is executed before or after the sending of said message; and

- executing said processing when said value is adapted to specify that the processing must be executed before the sending of the message.

16. Device for offering a service provided by a server computer in a communication network, comprising means of sending a service description document comprising a description of a functionality implemented during a preprocessing or post-processing of data in XML format of a message exchanged during the execution of the service on the communication network.

17. Device for testing access to a service by a client computer in a communication network, from a service description document, comprising:

- means of extracting a description of a functionality implemented during a preprocessing or the post-processing of data in XML format of a message exchanged during the execution of the service on the communication network;

- means of reading the value associated with a property adapted to specify the terminal in the communication network adapted to execute the processing;

- means of reading the value of a property adapted to specify whether the processing is obligatory or optional; and

- means of verifying whether the processing is supported by the client computer in the communication network when this processing is obligatory and must be executed by the client computer in the communication network.

18. Device for validating a message received by an intermediate computer in the communication network, from a service description document comprising a description of a functionality implemented during a preprocessing or the post-processing of data in XML format of the message exchanged during

5 the execution of a service on the communication network, comprising:

- means of extracting a processing from a message received;

- means of acquiring at least one imperative value associated with a property of the processing; and

- verification means adapted to verify whether the imperative value is

10 included in a list of values which can be attributed to a property supported by the functionality described in the service description document.

19. Server computer in a communication network, comprising means adapted to implement the method of offering a service according to Claim 1.

20. Client computer in a communication network, comprising means

15 adapted to implement the method of testing access according to Claim 13.

21. Computer in a communication network, comprising means adapted to implement the method of validating a message according to Claim 14.

22. Computer program which can be read by a microprocessor,

20 comprising portions of software code adapted to implement the method of offering a service according to Claim 1, when this computer program is loaded in and executed by the microprocessor.

23. Computer program which can be read by a microprocessor, comprising portions of software code adapted to implement the method of

25 testing access according to Claim 13, when this computer program is loaded in and executed by the microprocessor.

24. Computer program which can be read by a microprocessor, comprising portions of software code adapted to implement the method of validating a message according to Claim 14, when this computer program is

30 loaded in and executed by the microprocessor.